



Make Business Part of Rural Transit's Business

October 26, 2011

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Southeastern Institute of Research

Today's Agenda

Why Rural Transit Is Important To Business

**Ten Step Guide To Help Make Rural Transit
The Business of Business**

Discussion on Alaska Transit's Long Term Plan



Key Audiences

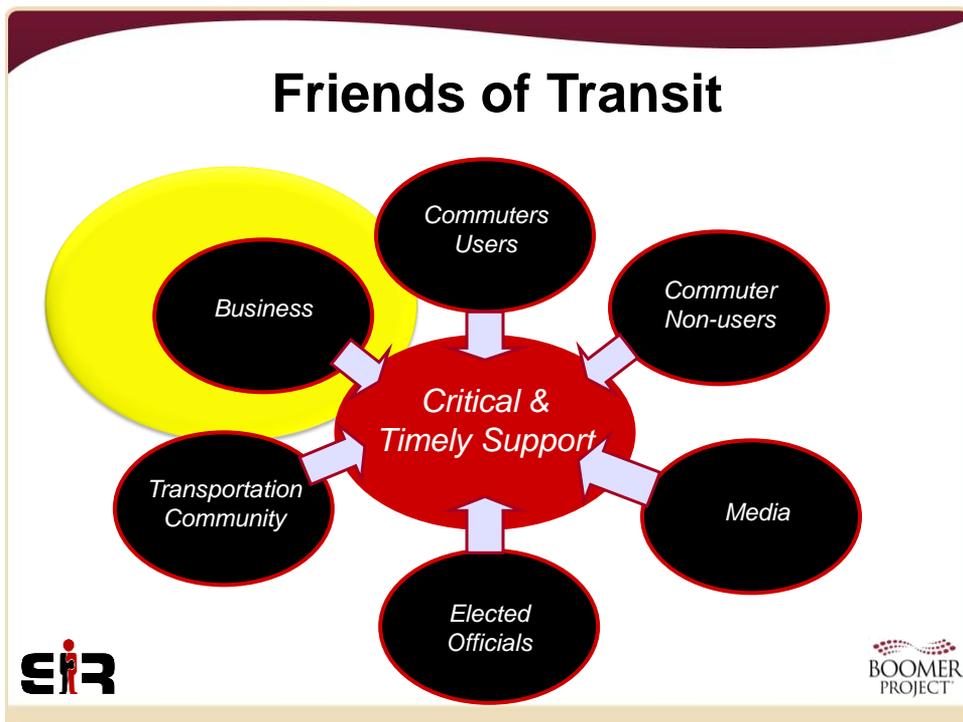
Old Way

- Riders Council
- Board Members
- Elected Officials
- Media

New Way

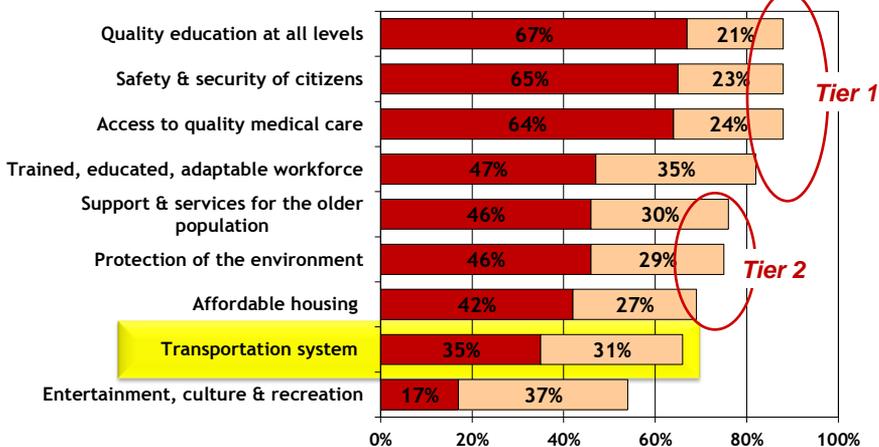
Multiple Stakeholders
including
Business

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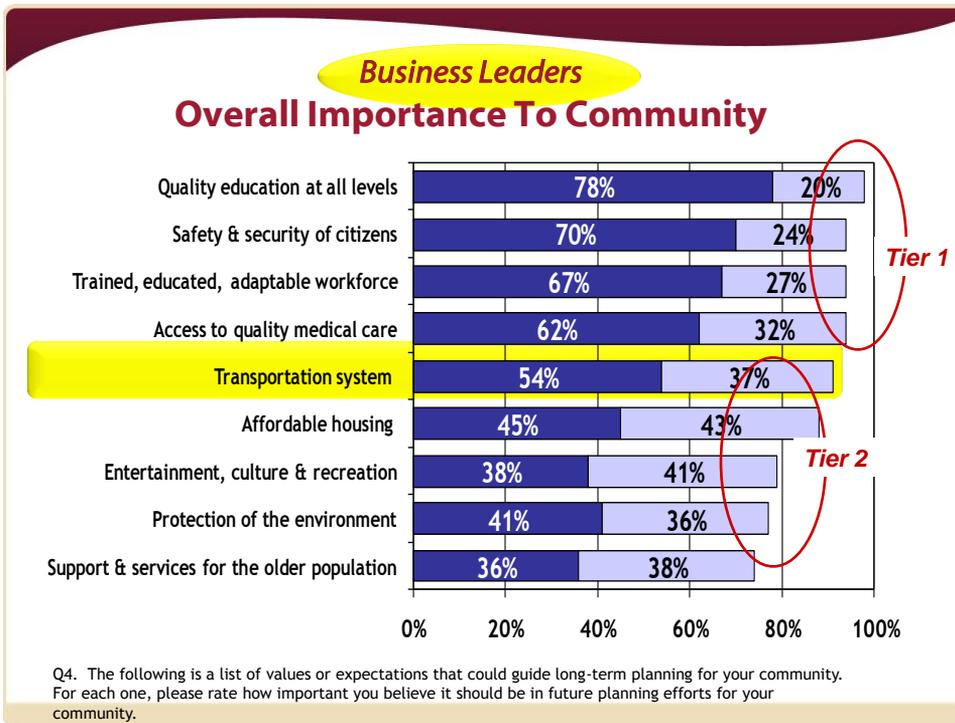


Q4. The following is a list of values or expectations that could guide long-term planning for your community. For each one, please rate how important you believe it should be in future planning efforts for your community.

Residents' Importance
Today, Transportation Is Lower Tier Issue



Q4. The following is a list of values or expectations that could guide long-term planning for your community. For each one, please rate how important you believe it should be in future planning efforts for your community.

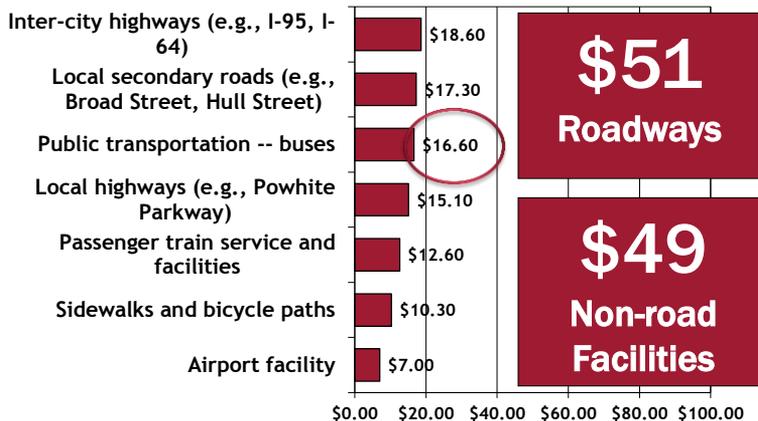


Funding Priorities

Imagine you have a \$100 budget to spend across all transportation needs - providing funding to support each service.

You may assign as much as you want to any need, but you only have \$100 to spend among all of them. How would you distribute the \$100 among these services or needs?

Business Leaders Support Alternatives to Roadways for Transportation Funding
 (Metro Richmond Business Community – CEOs)



Q13. Imagine you have a \$100 budget to spend across all transportation needs - providing funding to support each service. You may assign as much as you want to any need, but you only have \$100 to spend among all of them. How would you distribute the \$100 among these services or needs?

Business Leaders Say Their Employees Are Affected by Their Commute

50%
High Stress

Daily commute increases employees' stress

Q12. For each of the statements below, please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Business Leaders Say Their Employees
Are Affected by Their Commute

38%
Punctuality

*Congestion makes it difficult
for employees to get to work on time*

Q12. To what extent do you think employees are affected by their commute to and from work? For each of the statements below, please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

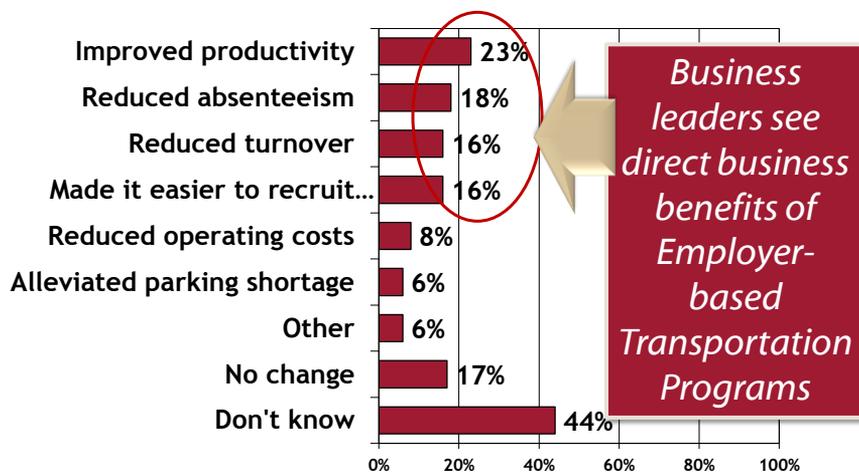
Business Leaders Say Their Employees
Are Affected by Their Commute

30%
**Lack of Flexibility
(Can't Stay Late)**

Q12. To what extent do you think employees are affected by their commute to and from work? For each of the statements below, please tell us the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

***In which of the following ways
has your company benefited by
offering commute support
services to your employees?***

Company Benefits of Offering Transportation Programs and Services



Q24a. In which of the following ways has your company benefited by offering these services or programs to employees?

**Partnering With
Rural Transit Makes
Cents for
Businesses, Too.**

**1.
Rural Transit Can
Provide Business A Direct
Link to Workers.**





Challenge:

Santee Cooper, **state owned utility in South Carolina**, was faced with challenge of losing employees because of the rural location of its **headquarters located 40 miles west of Charleston**.

Rising gas prices were having severe negative impact on employee commuting costs making recruitment and retention of employees difficult.



Solution:

Santee Cooper partnered with TriCounty Link to offer transit service as part of TriCounty Link's Commuter Solutions routes providing **transit service to Santee Coopers' headquarters building**.

Santee Cooper **advertises on the Link buses in exchange for discounted bus passes for employees**. The routes also connect up to transit service in Charleston metro area (CARTA).

2009 APTA Award Winner

2010 Best Rural Public Transportation Provider - South Carolina





Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System (BRATS), Alabama

Ride to Work program was established after consultation with area businesses, area chambers of commerce, and with local human service agencies to develop services to connect rural areas to urban Mobile, Alabama market.



Results

- BRATS now runs over 2,000 passenger trips per month during the morning and evening commute.
- Supports over 1,000 jobs!

Source: CTAA 2009 Profile of Rural Vanpool Programs



2.

**Rural transit can help
business do more with less.**



Help Business Do More With Less

- ❖ Not all businesses want to operate their own “jobs bus”
- ❖ Off-strategy
- ❖ Capital and operating costs





Brazos Transit District – Texas

- Sanderson Farms, a chicken processing plant in Bryan, Texas, was having issues maintaining workers for their second shift due to transportation issues
- After exploring where there they could find workers, they asked Brazos Transit District (The D) if they could help.
- BTD worked with Sanderson Farms and Madison County to find a location for their workers to congregate to board the bus.
- BTD provides this new service with their own vehicles as this shift does not interfere with regular day-time service.



Results:



- Service began 3/2/2009 with trip count of approximately 280 trips per month.
- Current trip count is approximately 500 trips per month.
- Sanderson Farms pays for the service 100%.

Source: Brazos Transit District, 2010



3.

Rural Transit Can Help The Business Community Support their Local Economy.



The greater the number of people who have access and mobility, the greater the circulation of money and economic activity.





"Santee Cooper made a conscious decision to improve the transit options for their employees, and they have supported that decision with hard work.

The result of that hard work has created a network of commuter routes that not only serves their employees but the surrounding communities as well."

Source: Santee Cooper PowerSource – Winter 2010



Delta Area Rural Transit System (DARTS) Tunica, Mississippi

DARTS is now part of:

- Expansion of the regional job market
- Serves increasing need for affordable employment transportation
- Proactive coordinating partner with employment agencies, local employers, human service agencies, and potential customers.



4.

**Rural Transit Can
Provide **Business Leaders**
With A Way To Contribute to
their Community's
Quality of Life**



5.

**Rural Transit Can
Provide Businesses with a
Vital Link to
other Communities.**



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The Business of Business**

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10

**Easy Steps To
Help Make Rural Transit
The Business Of Business**

Two Big Ideas Behind All 10: Be Proactive



Baldwin Rural Area Transportation System (BRATS), Alabama

Ride to Work program was established after consultation with area businesses, area chambers of commerce, and with local human service agencies to develop services to connect rural areas to urban Mobile, Alabama market.



Two Big Ideas Behind All 10: Be Proactive & Innovative

TCRP Report 136

*“...**active involvement in the community** by transit managers in rural and small urban communities has been found in prior research to be one of a number of characteristics of the **more innovative small transit systems** (34).*

*This active involvement was found to include a variety of approaches such as **membership in the Chamber of Commerce** and other community organizations, **frequent communication** of the transit system’s achievements at local events and forums, efforts to seek out and respond to community transit needs with **new transit services**, and having an **entrepreneurial orientation**—all of which helped the transit system to gain visibility and support throughout the community and to secure local funding commitments.”*

Source: TCRP Report 136, 2009



1

Put On Your Best Suit

1. Package Your Existing Service

- ❖ Service Area
- ❖ Number of customers transported
 - ❖ Workers
 - ❖ Shoppers
 - ❖ Students
 - ❖ Tourists
- ❖ Highlight any existing business partnerships
- ❖ Join local chamber, economic development efforts, and BBB to show linkages



What To Do

Develop briefing presentation that tells your story

What To Do

Include all of the case studies in this presentation as examples of what is being done.

Pulaski Area Transit



- ❖ Belongs to the Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Visits new businesses that come to the community
- ❖ Participates in local events and hosts annual golf tournament
- ❖ Develops brochures and handouts that showcase the transit system including ridership data specifically to major destinations served by transit such as the hospital, community college, and a large retailer
- ❖ The manager then presents this data to those specific entities—evidence of the transit system's role in bringing passengers to those destinations



Pulaski Area Transit



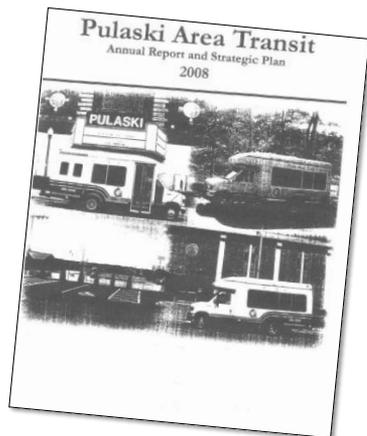
- ❖ In addition to significant local funding from the city and county, PAT has received funding from local businesses.
- ❖ This includes a considerable contribution from the local Wal-Mart that funded Saturday service for a number of Saturdays (the system operates weekdays only) as well as \$50 from a local fast food restaurant—a very small amount but meaningful in that the small business even considered support for local transit.



2008 FTA Ridership Award Winner



Pulaski Area Transit



2008 FTA Ridership Award Winner



2

**First Stop — Visit the
Recommenders**

First Stop - Recommenders

- ❖ Identify “friendly” business organizations like Chambers of Commerce and economic development organizations
- ❖ Your key message: “We are here to help.”
- ❖ Ask to be profiled in their newsletter or to present at monthly meeting.



What To Do

**Visit Chambers of Commerce
and economic development
organizations to make your case**



3

Second Stop — Likely Prospects

Second Stop – Likely Prospects

- ❖ Identify likely business prospects in your region.
- ❖ Use newspaper and other sources to see who is doing well. Who is hiring?
- ❖ Try to meet face to face. Work through Chamber of Commerce.



What To Do

**Meet with likely prospects.
Ask CEOs – “What are greatest
workforce challenges
facing the company?”**



4

**Listen.
Keep an Open Mind.**

Listen to Business Leaders

- ❖ Transportation may not be #1 challenge
- ❖ Probe deeper about retention and turnover rates – costs to replace one worker.
- ❖ Why do employees leave – is transportation an underlying factor?



What To Do

Make Your Own Luck



5

Be Creative

Case Study:



Challenge:

Blue Ridge Community College needed to help students and faculty get to their rural campus located between two small towns of Harrisonburg and Staunton, Virginia.

The college went to the local rural transit company and asked for a special service but had little money to offer.





Solution:

The rural transit operator could use federal and state dollars to fund 68 percent of the new service *if* it was a “public bus service”—open to anyone who wanted to ride on it. The new service would, however, have a majority of its stops on the community college campus and the most populated areas of the two feeder towns. One of the stops in each feeder town was planned as a transfer station where they tied into the towns’ local bus systems. Today, two buses run 15 hours a day carrying 4,000 people a month to and from the Blue Ridge Community College!



Challenge:

Augusta Health, located in Staunton, Virginia built a new, smaller expansion hospital near Waynesboro, Virginia.

The problem presented itself when local residents of Waynesboro who were referred from their home base hospital couldn’t make their appointments in Staunton.



Case Study:



❖ Solution:

- ❖ Augusta Health contributes \$60,000 per year to help subsidize this community lifeline—the shuttle system between the hospital facilities and the feeder towns. Two buses travel 12 hours a day. Transfer centers work at three points on the route. Today, 3,600 riders a month use this service now in its seventh year of operation.



What To Do

Think outside of the box to offer solutions to meet business challenges



6

Crawl, Walk, Run

Crawl, Walk, Run

- ❖ Start small
- ❖ Experiment with different capital and operating cost scenarios
- ❖ Be creative



Case Study: Kings Area Rural Transit



Challenge:

Limited transportation options for residents and workers in the San Joaquin Valley, located in southern California, needing to travel to work sites such as farms, correctional facilities and employers located in rural communities throughout the region. Additionally, farm workers were travelling in unsafe and unreliable conditions. New services would have to meet long-distance commute patterns and off-peak shift hours.



Case Study: Kings Area Rural Transit



Solution:

KART started a vanpool program to meet the transportation needs in the region. These vanpools effectively address the challenges of limited public transit options for work trips, varied work sites and nontraditional work shifts.

Additionally, farm workers have safe, reliable transportation operated by qualified drivers.

Currently, more than 350 vanpools operate in eight counties.

Now casinos and ski resorts throughout the state are turning to KART for advice as well.



What To Do

**Start with just one van.
Try a creative arrangement
that minimizes “at risk”
Time and money.**



7

**Work It,
Don't Just Watch It**

Work It, Don't Just Watch It

The hard work starts after the deal –
when the service is launched

Give it time to work

Get smart and use the information and insights
to continuously improve the product



What To Do

- ❖ Ride the service.
- ❖ Ask people what they think.
- ❖ How did they hear about it?
- ❖ Why aren't others using it?
- ❖ Could they recruit others?



8

Measure and Record Program Impact

Measure and Record Impact

- ❖ Record everything
 - ❖ Operational costs
 - ❖ Ridership
 - ❖ Rider satisfaction
 - ❖ Community impact

- ❖ Use information gathered here in Step 9 to “take temperature” of business partners



What To Do

**Review RTAP Webinar
“Measure and Report
Your Impacts”**



9

**Package Your New
Program’s Success**

Package Your Program's Success

- ❖ Make business partners the heroes
- ❖ Package your success in "sound bites"
- ❖ You will be doing the heavy lifting here – not your business partner
- ❖ Businesses will support any success story that they are associated with



What To Do

- ❖ **Turn to GenY's in your agency and give them this task - technology - oriented, community-minded.**
- ❖ **Create one page factsheets**
- ❖ **Consider a short YouTube video**



**The more you try
to keep out of the
limelight, the more
you will be in it.**

10

**Celebrate and Fuel the Buzz-
Community Transit Delivers
Bottom Line Benefits**

Fuel the Buzz

- ❖ Distribute electronic links and hard copy case studies to the Chamber of Commerce and economic development groups, media and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Remind them about your service and the overall impact your business partners are making on the community.



What To Do

**Don't wait for others
to tell your story.**

**Toot your (business
partners') own horn!**



1. Make A Plan To Approach Businesses

Review this presentation with your senior team. Customize the ten steps for your operation/market.

2. Involve Others In Making Your Plan

With just a little information packaged on your operation, visit with the local chamber and economic development folks. Together, finalize your plan to introduce you as a business resource.

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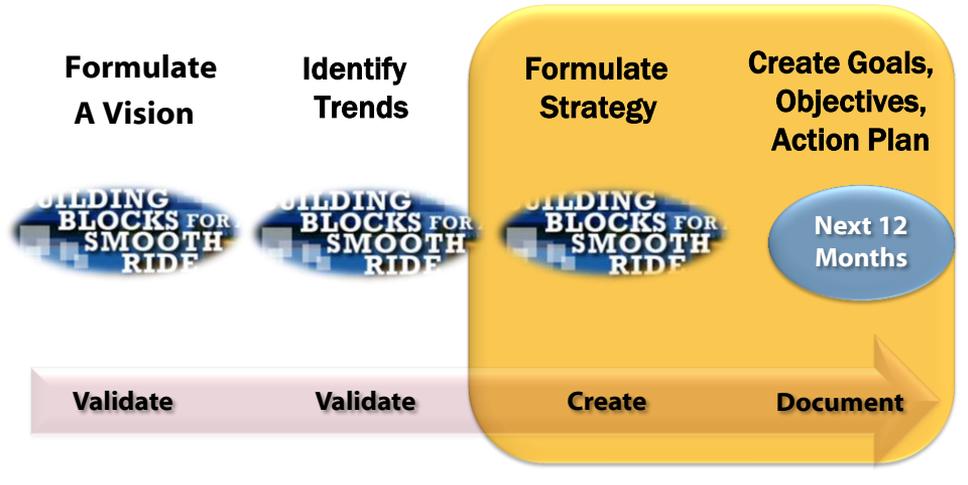
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A Foundation For Your Strategic Plan





Alaska's community transit systems is a ...

***National model ... of a
customer-focused ...
integrated system ... that
provides all Alaskans ... a vital
community link ... that's
simply indispensable.***





Alaska Transit's Future

**Most Trends
Are Tailwinds,
Not Headwinds**

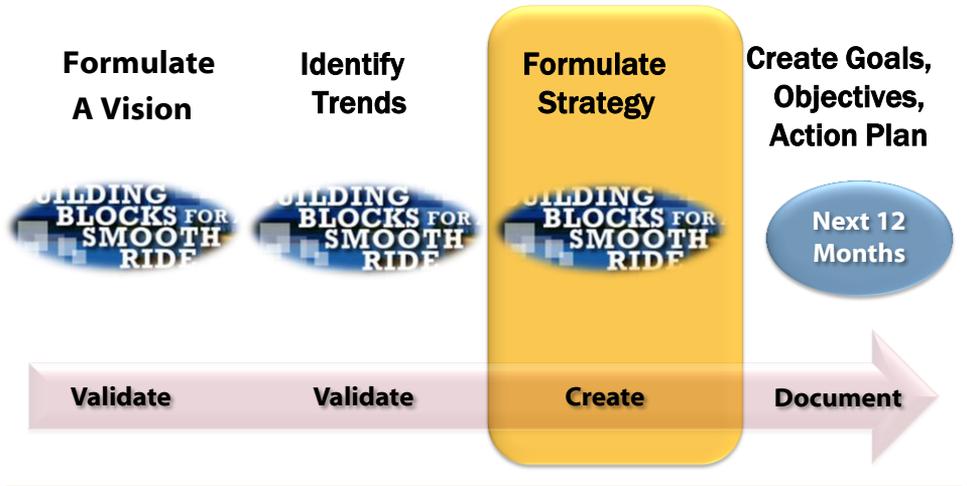


3

**Focused On Point
of Leverage**

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A Foundation For Your Strategic Plan



Non-DOT Federal Funds Can Be Used As Match For FTA Formula Grants

Thank you SAFETEA-LU

Be Careful Who You Marry

*Sometimes, Blending two Federal
fund sources, you must follow most
stringent requirements of either one*

Operational Funds Are Much
Harder To Get Than Startup Funds

Be Careful

New Models Galore:
Example: One United Way Fund
Allowed Funds To Be Used
for Operations

Just Ask!

Grant Management Can Cost As Much As The Grant

Read the fine print

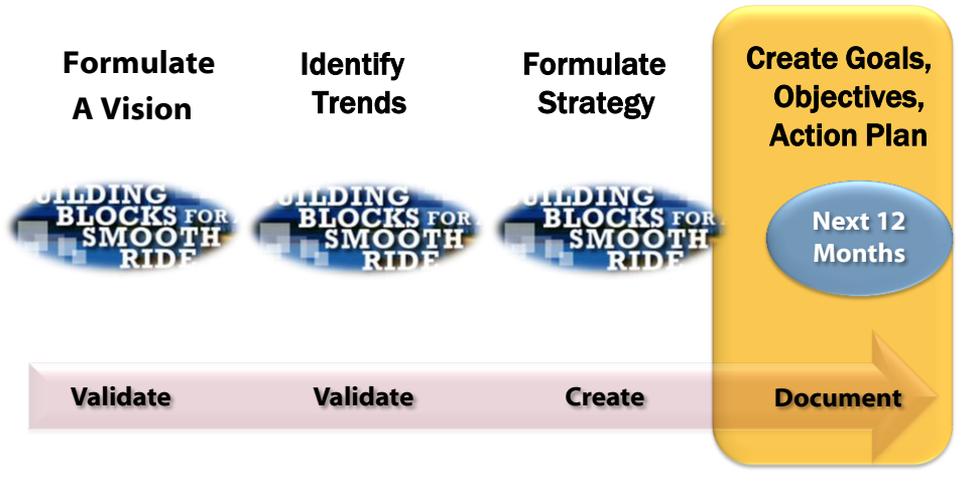
There Is A Difference Between In-Kind Versus Cash

Alaska DOT Counts Only Hard Cash as
“Cash.” In-kind is using a driver or bus
or a rented space from another agency
/ program and associating a value.

Coordinated Transportation Task Force



A Foundation For Your Strategic Plan



SIR

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